

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the Plaza El Panteon.

## **Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One**

*October 13, 1997*

### **Brazil-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** Are you going to get a bad reception in Brazil?

**The President.** I don't think so. You know, historically, there have been strained relations between the United States and Brazil. I met with President Cardoso when he was President-elect at the Summit of the Americas, and of course he's been to see me. And we worked very hard on this. I think it will be a very good trip.

### **1996 Campaign Finance Inquiry**

**Q.** Janet Reno says she might want to interview you as the investigation goes on. Do you have any problem with that?

**The President.** As I said before, I'll do anything that is necessary to get her and the Justice Department the information they need. I just want them to have the information they need and then be free to make the right decision.

### **White House Communications Agency Videotapes**

**Q.** Do you understand why she's mad, and have you done anything to try to prevent it from happening again?

**The President.** Of course I do. You think she was mad; you should have been there when I heard about it.

**Q.** So you were mad, too?

**The President.** Of course, but I'm—first of all, I think Lanny Breuer was on television yesterday explaining what happened on the delayed notification. And, you know, I think he made a mistake—but he said that. And he's worked very hard at his job. And they're all—as you can imagine, they've got all this work that any White House Counsel would have and then all this to do. But I think it was a good thing that he and Mr. Ruff went on and explained the facts of what happened.

And as far as WHCA is concerned, what they—I don't think they intended to mislead anybody. They've been working hard to try

to find all the information they've got. I think they've got a few more tapes which, as I understand it, won't surprise any of you that have been going to the fundraisers with me for the last years. They basically just—as I understand it, that's what they are, they show events. And they're going to turn them over.

**Q.** [*Inaudible*—any of these tapes of you directly soliciting or anything like that. You don't think—

**The President.** Look at them. I think they're perfectly fine. But I want the committee to have them, the Justice Department to have them.

WHCA tries to take a little snippet of everything that I'm involved in so they have it recorded for history. It's fine. I do want to make it clear that—as I understood the inference of the first—I was unaware of this because I never saw the request for information or the efforts to provide it. But I think Mike has made it clear that we never had any sort of secret taping system like was—the Kennedy or Nixon or Johnson administrations did. We've never done anything like that.

**Q.** Mr. President, is Congress nitpicking with you—the committee nitpicking by wanting all this information and wanting names of people who handled the tapes and all these other, what seem minute details? Is that nitpicking?

**The President.** We had given them 100,000 pieces of information before—the committee—and we'll give them whatever they need to do their job.

But I think they'll find, for example, on handling the tapes—you know, all these WHCA people that I've dealt with, they're career servicepeople, they're not political. They're trying to do their job, as they see it, to get some video record of the things a President does. And they're doing their best to fully comply. They're career military people, not politicians, and for all I know they've never been involved in anything like this before. And I think they've done their best. They've worked like crazy to try to find out if they had anything else on file. And I think they're doing—I think the Senate and the House and the Justice Department will be satisfied that all those folks did their best.

**Attorney General Janet Reno**

**Q.** Attorney General Reno has been under a lot of pressure from a lot of quarters. Having been a State attorney general, what kind of standard do you have for how an attorney general should handle this kind of a situation and deal with the——

**The President.** There is one quarter from which there has been no pressure—ours. I have gone out of my way to have no conversation with her—about this or, frankly, anything else, which I'm not sure is so good, except I saw her at the event the other day, that we did the other day, that we did for the police officers, where we announced the trigger locks on handguns.

I think the Republican attacks on her have been completely unwarranted. It's interesting—it would be hard to make a case that she was reluctant to follow this law. There are facts, there are standards, there are all kinds of procedures set out about how this law is supposed to operate. And she ought to be let alone to implement it.

**Q.** When you say that it's been not so good that you haven't been able to always have contact with her, do you mean there have been times you would have reached out to her on some issue or some subject that you haven't because you were afraid about how it might be perceived?

**The President.** I haven't even entertained it one way or the other. I just think that, at least until she finishes her complete review of this and makes a decision one way or the other, it's better if all the contacts be sort of in official channels unless some huge national emergency arises. You know, Mr. Ruff talks to the Justice Department all the time. I just want to make sure, particularly with all this unwarranted political talk in the air coming from other quarters, I just want to make sure that we don't compound it in any way, shape, or form. I think that these are legal judgments that have to be made on the basis of the facts, on the basis of what the practice is, and of course the law, all the things that are in that law. It's very explicitly set out, and so I think she should be left alone to do it. That's what I'm trying to do.

**White House Communications Agency  
Videotapes**

**Q.** There is this one tape, in which a fellow who turned out to be a—says, "James Riady sent me." And Republicans are trying to make a big deal out of that. What do you say about that? Is there anything nefarious there?

**The President.** That's the wealthy Asian who was a resident immigrant that gave the DNC a lot of money over a long period of time? Well, first of all, until the DNC decided to return his contributions, I was unaware that he had given and certainly how much he had given. But I don't think there is anything to be made of that. He was an Indonesian. He was a friend of James Riady, who—I have known James since the 1970's in Arkansas. So I draw no inference from that, and neither should anybody else.

You know, I've already testified—discussed that, that the Riadys, when they came—James came to see me in the meeting that's been discussed. He basically said he supported my China policy and urged me to stick with it. That was it.

As I've said repeatedly, a lot of other people, in a way that was totally appropriate, in discussing the Middle East with me or the expansion of NATO or the problems between Greece and Turkey, you know, have been much more explicit and specific in detail than saying, "Here's what I think we ought to do." That's part of the way a democracy works; people should express their opinions. I took no offense at it.

**Q.** As you watch these tapes, these moments, the same kind of scene again and again, what goes through your mind? All the work that was involved? I mean, you seem to——

**The President.** I haven't watched, so I don't know. But as I have said repeatedly, and I know that some of you have scoffed at me for saying it, the coffees in particular I found quite helpful, because they brought in all kinds of people from all over America and they just talked. Most of the times—I would say the vast majority of the times—the issues raised by people at the coffees did not bear directly on their personal business activities. And I wish, I have said repeatedly, that we had at least a print reporter at all

these coffees so they would have been reported and there wouldn't have been any undue suspicion about it. It never occurred to me one way or another, because Presidents have meetings all the time without reporters there. But in this case—we still meet with groups of people, although not necessarily just political supporters. I think those kinds of things are good.

But in terms of the fundraisers, when I see the films of those, it just reminds me of how hard we worked last year. And we knew we were going to be outspent, and we just didn't want to be outspent too bad, so we did a lot of fundraisers.

### **1996 Campaign Finance Inquiry**

**Q.** Mr. President, Janet Reno, by Wednesday, has to make a decision about whether to proceed to the next stage of the investigation of the fundraising phone calls. Early reports say she won't go forward because there is no direct proof that you made phone calls. How do you feel facing that deadline and those reports?

**The President.** I do not want to say anything that interferes with her decision in any way. I have no comment.

**Q.** Are you saying unconditionally that you would speak to her if she wanted to interview in connection to that?

**The President.** I think, first of all, it's up to them to decide—the task force, the Attorney General—whether they have the information from me they think they need. If they think they need more, as I have repeatedly said, I will do whatever I can to get them whatever information they think they need.

**Q.** Including speaking to her?

**The President.** If she wishes to interview me.

### **Brazil-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** Can I switch the subject? Back to Brazil, where do you think this American bashing is coming from? How do you account for it?

**The President.** You mean, the recent press lately? Well, I don't know. There is some speculation that there were some problems with the advance team in Brasilia, something like that. Is that right? I don't know about that; I can't comment on it. But this

is a rather challenging trip for the advance team because we have so many Members of Congress and so many Cabinet members. It's sort of a big group to move around.

I hope that our people haven't done anything inappropriate. I know that that's something we worked very, very hard on. When I became President, I heard sort of generic criticisms that often the Presidential team—everywhere, I don't mean my predecessor, I mean just generically—sometimes they were thought to be a little overbearing. So we've done a lot of kind of training work on that topic, and we try not to do that.

So I don't know anything about the facts; if we did anything we shouldn't have done, I'm sorry. But I can tell you this, the relationship that I hope that we have with Brazil is better than it's been in a very, very long time, maybe ever—but certainly in a long time. And the relationship we need to build with Brazil is critical to the future. If you go back to Ron Brown's list of 10 emerging nations, go back to anybody's analysis of which countries will really have a huge impact on the future, particularly for us in our backyard, Brazil is one of them and one of the leading potential candidates for a much larger role in the world in the 21st century. And I view that as a positive thing.

I think it's an exciting, interesting place with a fabulous culture—great music. I was down here listening to my Brazilian music I brought along with me.

**Q.** You brought some?

**The President.** Oh, yes.

**Q.** What did you bring?

**The President.** I've got a lot of my old Antonio Carlos Jobim records. But I also have some newer records back at the house; I left some of them back.

I feel basically quite positive. I think Cardoso has been an exceptional leader, defending Brazil's national interests, understanding its unique challenges, and trying to form a constructive partnership with us while building a MERCOSUR alliance and reaching out to other countries on the South American continent. So I feel very upbeat.

But if there are a few scratches on the record that you hear as we go in, keep in mind, you have to see this against the background of the historic relationship between

the United States and Brazil, which was much more tense and conflicted than it is today.

### **Relevance of Trip to South America**

**Q.** Mr. President, for the average person back home, what would you hope that he or she would draw from your experiences that you're having here in South America—the trip itself, your message?

**The President.** Well, I would hope that the average person would think, number one, it's a good thing for America that these countries believe in democracy and free markets, because that means that it's less likely that we'll have the kind of difficulties we had 30 or 40 years—actually going back to the beginning of the century in the Americas because of political upheavals, military dictatorships, things of that kind.

Number two, I am convinced that there is an increasing determination among the South Americans to join us in a common fight against drug trafficking and crime, and that's important.

Number three, I hope they will see through your reporting and the pictures you send back that there is an enormous amount of economic potential down here, and it's a great market for America's goods and services, and we ought to be selling more to these people. They have been very willing to buy our products. Seventy percent of our increase in trade in the last year has come from Canada to the tip of South America, and we need to do more. I hope that—and I hope all of you when you leave here will think that we made a better case for fast track just by being down here, just by seeing the enormous economic potential and how the Latin Americans can use things that we have to sell in ways that benefit us both.

### **Fast-Track Trading Authority**

**Q.** [Inaudible]—until now?

**The President.** Well, I think there are a lot of reasons. But I think one problem is, there is a lot of residual over NAFTA. The people who were against NAFTA are against this. But in the case of NAFTA, you had Mexico on our border with 100 million people and a set of very specific terms in the trade agreement, so that there were a lot of

winners as well as people who thought they were going to lose. So the scales of the debate were more evenly balanced. Plus the other consequences—the political consequences, the immigration consequences, the drug consequences, as well as the economic benefits, were all much more stark and immediate with Mexico and NAFTA.

The fast-track vote is a process vote to give the President the power to present other trade agreements to the Congress. Two categories of them have generally been very popular with both Democrats and Republicans—that is, anything that expands global trade under the WTO, which is good for us because we're competitive; and sector-specific agreements, like the information technology agreement we negotiated which is going to create tens of thousands, maybe even a couple hundred thousands good American jobs in the next few years.

The third category is where the controversy is. It would give Ambassador Barshefsky the ability to try to negotiate an agreement with other individual countries. Except here, the people who weren't for NAFTA or the people who think that it didn't work or the people who were worried about something else, they have their worries out there, but we don't yet have the specific benefits out there except in a conjecture, because I don't have an agreement. NAFTA was a specific agreement. So, in a way, the opposition can burn a little whiter heat and show a little more intensity. And I think that that's a difficult thing for us.

I also think, in fairness to the Democrats, we have raised the issue—all of us, I'm not using the Presidential “we”—our party put the question on the agenda, really, about the role that labor standards and environmental standards should have in the trade equation. And we're having an in-house debate about what the best way to do that is.

You know, Senator Moynihan, for example, who's got a very strong pro-labor record at home and abroad and a very strong trade record, thinks that there shouldn't be trade sanctions applied for specific environmental or labor issues but we ought to be able to go at it in other ways. Mr. Gephardt believes we shouldn't have another trade agreement unless it contains trade sanctions for labor

and environmental reasons, or at least that we ought to try to negotiate that.

What I tried to do is to leave most of our options open there so that I could get the best agreement I can. But knowing that, regardless, I'm not going to negotiate an agreement that I do not believe is in the best interest of the United States. Congress will be able to review it and decide whether it helps create jobs and a better future for us. And I think that engaging these countries will increase our ability to influence them as they try to raise labor standards and deal with environmental issues.

The Venezuelans—we were talking—they understand that they can't preserve their democracy in a free market economy unless they try to strengthen the social compact. They've got to figure out a way for more people to do well, and they've got to figure out an intergenerational strategy that not only supports education for children but protects the environment.

So I think that we're going in the right direction—the direction that the opponents of fast track want to go in, that is, those that are really interested in the labor and environmental issues.

There are some people who simply think that globalization always works to our disadvantage, and I just don't agree with that. And I think that it's not a realistic option. The global economy is on a fast track. The Europeans are reaching out to the MERCOSUR nations. Even though our exports have grown a great deal to Latin America, the European exports have grown even more and now outpace ours. And their trade union movements in their country, for example, and other people like—they seem to understand that, because of what they have to sell and because of the trade relationships, they're going to come out, net, ahead. That's what I believe is the case in America and why I'm pushing this so hard.

**Q.** Are you going to win?

**The President.** I think so. It's a tough fight, but I think we'll win. But it's just a—it's really a debate over principle with me. And I believe the United States has to create more high-wage jobs for the future so that

we can start growing together again. The last couple of years, we've finally got some indication that the bottom 40 percent of our workers are beginning to raise their incomes equal to and after taxes maybe even a little more, in percentage terms, than the upper 20 percent. But that's after 20 years of complete stagnation.

And the evidence is not clear yet. We have to change the job mix every year. The last 2 years, more than half our new jobs have paid above-average wages—dramatic contrast from the eighties and the early nineties. The only way for us to keep that trend going and accelerate it is for us to trade more in areas where we have a competitive advantage, where we make things that are sophisticated, with workers who make good incomes—we make more of that. That's the first thing.

The second thing is, I believe the United States has to send a signal to our allies, particularly in this hemisphere, and our allies in Asia and in Africa, that we know we're in a new world and it's a world in which we're interdependent and which we want to lead through partnerships.

So I think the political interest we have in having stable countries growing more successful, being firmly democratic, working with us on issues like labor and environmental conditions argues overwhelmingly for the adoption of fast track and giving the President the authority to go do this work. There is a principle at stake here, so I would be fighting for it if I thought I had no chance to win, because it relates centrally to the way I see the world unfolding and the ties that I've tried to create for the United States in the Americas, in Asia, in Africa, as well as reaffirming our historic ties to Europe.

**NOTE:** The exchange began at 3:15 p.m. en route from Venezuela to Brazil. In his remarks, the President referred to President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil; Counsel to the President Charles F.C. Ruff; Press Secretary Mike McCurry; and businessman James Riady of the Lippo Group. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

### **Statement on Signing the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 1998**

*October 13, 1997*

I have today signed into law H.R. 2203, the "Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 1998," which provides \$20.7 billion in discretionary budget authority for the discretionary programs of the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several smaller agencies.

The Act provides necessary funding to continue DOE's commitment to ensuring the safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile and DOE's investment in developing advanced renewable energy technologies. The Act also provides essential funding to develop and protect the Nation's environmental resources.

I hereby declare \$5 million from the Construction General account of the Army Corps of Engineers for the construction of an emergency outlet for Devils Lake, North Dakota, as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(I) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

I urge the Congress to complete action on the remaining FY 1998 appropriations bills as quickly as possible, and to send them to me in an acceptable form.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
October 13, 1997.

NOTE: H.R. 2203, approved October 13, was assigned Public Law No. 105-62.

### **Statement on the Death of John Denver**

*October 13, 1997*

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of John Denver. His soaring music evoked the grandeur of our landscape and the simple warmth of human love. He was a dedicated champion of the environment, spending many hours on the vital work of protecting natural heritage. And he opened

many doors to understanding among nations through his tours of the Soviet Union, China, and Vietnam. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and to his millions of fans.

### **Remarks at a Reception With President Fernando Cardoso of Brazil in Brasilia**

*October 13, 1997*

President and Mrs. Cardoso, members of the Brazilian Government, my fellow Americans, honored guests. Let me say, on behalf of all of us who are here, it is wonderful to be in Brazil, but it is especially wonderful for me. I have wanted to come here for a long time, and even more since Hillary returned from her fantastic visit here.

When President Cardoso made his state visit to the United States, I pledged to return the favor. And finally, the day has arrived, and I am in the City of the Sky, glad to be here. Thank you.

Brazil has haunted my imagination for over 30 years, since I first fell in love with your music as a young man. And Brazil has loomed large in my vision of the future of this hemisphere and the world since I became President. I come to Brazil to strengthen our partnership in a spirit of respect and equality, a partnership rooted in common values and common aspirations.

We have been friends in freedom for a long time. In 1824, the United States was the first nation to recognize Brazil's independence. In World War II, Brazil stood by America's side on the battlefields of Europe with a force of 25,000 troops to fight for liberty's survival.

Now, at the dawn of the 21st century, the freedom we cherish is ascendant. Every nation in our hemisphere but one is a democracy. Open markets are taking root. Cooperation and trade are expanding. We have an opportunity to make all the Americas a stronghold of freedom and prosperity, of peace and security, advancing our own well-being and serving as a beacon of hope to others.

With the largest populations and the largest economies in the Americas, sharing both the virtues and the challenges of our size and